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Public Information Office
455 Golden Gate Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94102-3688
www.courtinfo.ca.gov

415-865-7740

Lynn Holton
Public Information Officer

Chief Justice to Testify on Death Penalty Proposal at January 10 Public Hearing

San Francisco—Chief Justice Ronald M. George will testify at 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, January 10, 2008, concerning a proposal that would help alleviate the large backlog of fully-briefed death penalty appeals pending before the Supreme Court, and permit the court to devote more of its limited time and resources to significant death penalty issues and other important civil and criminal appellate litigation.

The testimony will be delivered at a public hearing to be held by the Commission on the Fair Administration of Justice in the State Capitol Building, Hearing Room 4203, Sacramento.

Chief Justice George is expected to speak for about 20 to 25 minutes and will answer questions from the commission following his remarks. He is one of eight speakers scheduled to testify regarding the administration of the death penalty. For more information, see the commission's Web site at www.ccfaj.org.

The proposal to be discussed by the Chief Justice would amend the state Constitution to permit the Supreme Court to transfer death penalty appeals to the Courts of Appeal. The Constitution now grants the state Supreme Court authority to transfer any matter to the Court of Appeal—except for appeals from judgments imposing the death penalty. The proposed constitutional amendments are designed to:

- permit the Supreme Court to devote more of its limited time and resources to significant capital issues and to other important civil and criminal appellate litigation;
- through a broadened review process at the Supreme Court level, ensure that, as presently, the Supreme Court allows no death penalty judgment to be affirmed or reversed unless the court determines that result to be legally correct;
- ensure that a court considers fully-briefed cases without substantial delay; and
- promote the public's and the litigants' interests in both fair and reasonably prompt disposition of capital appeals.

For more information concerning the proposal, see
<http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/presscenter/newsreleases/NR76-07.PDF>.

The Chief Justice will answer questions from the press after his testimony. A copy of his remarks will be available Thursday morning.

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